bankment at Cumberland, Me., where it was first discovered by Mr. E. B. Chamberlain (Rhodora, vi. 195).

Vicia hirsuta L. I found on July 4, 1898, in moist woods on the World's End farm at Hingham, Mass. It is not included in Thomas T. Bouvé's very comprehensive flora of Hingham.

Vicia villosa Roth. Mr. W. P. Rich and I, while collecting in Marshfield, Mass., July 3, 1910, came across what we supposed to be luxuriant specimens of *V. Cracca* L. They grew in a dry field which had evidently not been in recent cultivation. Study of the pressed specimens shows them to be *V. villosa* Roth., easily distinguishable by villous stems, peduncles and leaves, and more vigorous growth. In *V. Cracca* the flowers are 10–12 mm. in length, in this species 13–16 mm. The pods, too, are larger, in my specimen 3.2 cm. long by 1 cm. wide.

Cassia marilandica L. I collected this species Sept. 3, 1902, in Chelmsford, Mass. It grew by the roadside near a brook, and had probably escaped from cultivation, as there is a house near. The place has been mowed in recent years, and I do not know whether the roots still persist or not.

Trifolium dubium Sibth. I first collected this at Hyannis, Mass., June 15, 1909. It is very abundant there. This year I found it very common on Nantucket, and also at Harwich. Mr. F. S. Collins, in Rhodora xi. 131, speaks of this plant as not infrequent in Eastham. This species seems to blossom a month earlier than its nearest relative, *T. procumbens* L. It is very slender, with few-flowered heads 6–8 mm. in diameter. Apparently this is identical with the little shamrock plant of which the city florists raise so many specimens for the early spring trade.

Hingham, Massachusetts.

Bartlett's Dioscoreae of the United States.— Bulletin 189 recently issued by the Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, contains matter of taxonomic interest not usually looked for in the publications of a bureau more especially devoted to the economic phases of botany. It is entitled, "The Source of the Drug Dioscorea, with a consideration of the Dioscoreae found in the United States. By Harley Harris Bartlett, Washington, 1910." The subject is treated under two heads. "Taxonomic history of the Dioscoreae of the United States," and "The Drug Dioscorea."

The latter mainly considers the rhizome of *Dioscorea*, the part used in pharmacy. It is well illustrated by figures that will prove of value also in identifying the plants by the subterranean portions of their stems. The former is a monograph of the *Dioscoreae* of the United States as viewed and elaborated by Mr. Bartlett. It is well known that but one species, *D. villosa* L., is given in all recent books treating the flora of this area. Bartlett makes five, three with names which had been used by previous authors, with two new species and one new variety. From maps that accompany the text showing the distribution of the three with revived names it is seen that they come into the "Manual region." They are (1) *D. paniculata* Michx., the most widely distributed species, from southern New England to eastern Kansas and Oklahoma, but most abundant in the north central States; (2) *D. glauca* Muhl., from Pennsylvania through the two Virginias, Kentucky and southward, but "being essentially a plant of the mountains" it is mainly found along the Appalachian belt; (3) *D. quaternata* (Walt.) Gmel., principally southern, coming into the "Manual region" in western Kentucky and eastern Missouri. *D. paniculata* var. *glabrifolia* Bartlett mostly replaces the typical form in the southwestern part of its range but is represented in Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Missouri. The writer has a fruiting specimen of *D. paniculata* from southwestern Michigan that from the description would go with the variety, being perfectly smooth. The two new species, *D. hirticaulis* Bartlett and *D. floridana* Bartlett are southern species of the Atlantic coastal plain.

It will be seen from this that *D. villosa* L. does not appear in this list. The reason given by Mr. Bartlett for dropping it is that provision of the Vienna code which allows a name to be discontinued "when the group which it designates embraces elements altogether incoherent, or which become a permanent source of confusion and error." The only basis for a type, if such it could be called, found in the herbarium of Linnaeus, is a sheet with an American plant; "at the bottom of which," according to Dr. B. Dayton Jackson, Secretary of the Linnaean Society, "is a note by Linné himself, '6 K sativa,' to which Smith has added in pencil, 'non est." No specimen named "*villosa*" by Linnaeus was found by Dr. Jackson in the herbarium. *D. sativa* L. is an East Indian plant, and since the sheet is marked as collected by Kalm ("K = Kalm") but named *sativa*, there is evidently a mistake or a confusing of Asiatic and American species, since Kalm collected in America. A. De Candolle found a similar confusing of species of *Dioscorea* by Linnaeus when he considered the origin of cultivated plants in his "Géographie Botanique," and more fully treated in a later work "L'Origine des plantes cultivées."[1] Under the name *D. sativa* Linnaeus had confounded several Asiatic and American species. Grisebach, in his "Flora of the

[1] *l. c.* p. 62.

British West Indies," mentions five species or forms that he deems thus comprised under *D. sativa*.[1] But De Candolle found a way out of the muddle without abandoning the name, leaving *D. sativa* L. for a plant cultivated in Ceylon "with which Linnaeus was acquainted." Such an opening did not seem available to Mr. Bartlett.

Matters were equally confusing and unsatisfactory as a basis for a "book species." For details and for the adoption of the names of three of the species that had previously been used, the reader is referred to the work itself. Taken altogether the author seems well justified in abandoning the name *D. villosa* L. We may regret the loss of a name of long standing, as we do in a similar case of Sargent's dropping for the same reason *Crataegus coccinea* L. But with *D. villosa* there is some compensation on the sentimental side for leaving a specific term that literally could not apply to the plant, or as Gray has expressed it in the earlier editions of his Manuals, "A bad name, for the plant is never villous, but often nearly smooth."

It is also apparent from all this that the "Linnaean concept of species," much emphasized by some, especially if not systematists, comes at times to be a very hard thing to apply in practice. However good in itself as a "concept," when it becomes so intangible that it cannot be run down and captured, it seems the part of wisdom to give up the chase.— E. J. HILL, Chicago, Illinois.

[1] *l. c.* p. 588.

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